



117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association

[www.117th-cav.org](http://www.117th-cav.org)

102d CAV (Mecz) 38<sup>th</sup> CAV (Mecz) 117<sup>th</sup> CAV (Mecz) 50<sup>th</sup> CAV RCN SQDN 50<sup>th</sup> RCN 5<sup>th</sup> RCN 5-117<sup>th</sup> CAV 1-102d CAVALRY  
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**President's Message** Spring is a time to look forward. Our 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association continues to outreach to our membership. The highlight of this initiative has been our members sharing their stories with our membership. February's meeting featured CPT's Giacchi and Harty presentation on their trip to France to help commemorate the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry's role in the liberation of Southern France. Our upcoming April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting will feature CPT Ryan Baily, the former HHT 1-102d Commander, will present a briefing on the recent deployment of his Military Assistance Team to Afghanistan.

It will also be a busy time for the 1-102d Cavalry as they prepare for the upcoming training year. They are fully engaged as they prepare for the deployment of Troop's A and B to the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin CA and the fielding of lots of new equipment (See the SCO's and CSM's articles for a complete description).

Thanks to CPT Jim Giacchi for helping to bring our finances into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Our members can now pay their dues or become a Spur Booster on line by going to our Web page and selecting the digital payment option. Our next challenge will allow new members to join on line. Look for that in the near future.

Our *Share our Story* Initiative continues as we add both historical and current pictures of New Jersey's Cavalry and Armor force to our digital collection. The latest works are new re-mastered digital pictures of the 102d Cavalry (Horse-Mechanized) at Ft. Jackson SC and maps of the routes of advance both the 102d Cavalry Group and the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron's march across Europe.

**Seventy Years ago**, Spring 1945: March 15-18, 1945 found 117<sup>th</sup> CRS, in the attack crossing into Germany in the vicinity of Ludwigswinkel in support of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. A large yellow road sign was erected on the main road leading into town. It said, "You are entering Germany, courtesy of the 117<sup>th</sup> Mecz. Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron" (see the picture page 11). The first two weeks of March 1945, found the 102d CRS patrolling the V Corps Main Supply Route, while the 38<sup>th</sup> CRS embarked upon a long road march to the Franco-German Border. March 24, 1945 New Jersey's Cavalry Troopers were reunited when the 102d Cavalry Group (102d and 38<sup>th</sup> CRS) and the 117<sup>th</sup> CRS came together. The 117<sup>th</sup> CRS was temporarily assigned to the 102d Cavalry Group which was assigned to the Seventh Army. It was the first time that they had been together since December 1942 when the 2d Squadron (later re-designated the 117<sup>th</sup> CRS) left for North Africa. This short reunion lasted till March 29<sup>th</sup>, when both organizations went their separate ways with the 102d Cavalry Group returned to V Corps and the 117<sup>th</sup> CRS returned to VI Corps.

**1-102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Troopers Honored** SSG John D. Cosel was selected as the *1SG William B. Maloney Trooper of the Year* for 2014. SSG Cosel presently serves as a Platoon Sergeant in Troop A 1-102d Cavalry. He joined the Army in 2002 and served on active duty with the K/3/3 ACR where he was recognized as the "Top Gun" M2A2ODS in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron. Assigned to the 5-15 Cavalry at Ft Knox KY he was recognized as the 1<sup>st</sup> Armor training Brigade's Squadron NCO of the quarter Squadron NCO of the Month and Instructor of the Cycle. SSG Cosel transitioned into National Guard in 2006 and deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2007-2008 with the 2-183<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry of the Virginia National Guard. In 2010, he joined the Pennsylvania Guard's 2-104<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. SSG Cosel's awards include ARCOM (6th Oak Leaf Cluster), AAM (2<sup>nd</sup> Oak Leaf Cluster), ARCAM, Good Conduct Medal (2<sup>nd</sup> Award), NCO Ribbon (3<sup>rd</sup> AWARD) Iraqi Campaign Ribbon (2 service stars), Overseas Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary, National Defense, Army Service Ribbon, Drivers Badge for Wheel and Track, German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge Bronze (second award), Valorous Unit Award, Superior Unit Award.

1LT Stephen Pruser is the first officer to be selected as the *COL Harold J. Samsel Junior Officer of the Year*. Colonel Samsel started his career in the 102d Cavalry in Westfield, NJ. Commissioned in 1941 when the 102d was mobilized for WWII. COL Samsel served in the 2d Squadron 102d Cavalry and the 117<sup>th</sup> CRS as its Operations Officer and Commander. After WWII, he was instrumental in the formation and organization of NJARNG Armor and Cavalry formations. Samsel served as President of the *Essex Troop* and was a founding member and the 1<sup>st</sup> President of the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association. 1LT Pruser presently serves as the command communications officer for the 1-102d Squadron. He joined the NJARNG in 2003 as an Armor Crewman in the Armor in the 102d Armor. He received his commission through ROTC at the College of New Jersey graduating in 2009 with a degree in Business Administration. 1LT Pruser continued his studies receiving a Law Degree from Rutgers in 2012. A core competency for all Cavalrymen is gathering information.

Because of his ability at plan, manage and execute tactical information on the asymmetrical battlefield for the 1-102d Cavalry, he is recognized as the go to guy for tactical information technology in the 1-102d Cavalry and as such was selected as the *COL Harold J. Samsel Junior of the Year* for 2014. His awards include the Army Commendation Medal and, National Defense Service Medal.

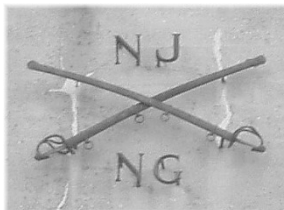
Both SSG Cosel and 1LT Prusser's stellar personal and professional efforts exemplify the National Guard's motto, "*Always Ready, Always There*", as they continue to *Show 'em the Way*!

Our next meeting of the *117th Cavalry Association* will be Friday April 10, 2015. There is a full agenda planned. Please continue to show your support in your sponsorship of our 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association newsletter "*The SPUR*." Many of you, especially *The SPUR Boosters* (page 10) have made and continue to make donations to help pay the cost of publication and its mailing. Thanks to all of you for your generosity in support of our Association our many initiatives in support of our membership and the 1-102d Cavalry.

*Show 'em the Way!*

*Dennis*

COL Dennis Dougherty USA Retired



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**Squadron Commander's Message** The Squadron will face many challenges over the next quarter this training year. We are deploying the Maintenance Platoon from D Co 250<sup>th</sup> BSB to the National Training Center (NTC) to provide maintenance support for the 3BCT, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, and A Troop 102<sup>nd</sup> CAV augmented with a platoon from C Troop 102<sup>nd</sup> CAV to provide Opposing Force (OPFOR) with the 11<sup>th</sup> ACR. As we prepare to deploy these units in the month of April, the Squadron will also be going through New Equipment Training and New Equipment Fielding (NET/NEF). The Squadron will be receiving upgrades and training for the Joint Capabilities Release (JCR), the Long Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System (LRAS3), and the Improved Target Acquisition System (ITAS). The JCR system links communication devices, sensors, vehicles, rotary-wing aircraft and weapons platforms in a seamless digital network to provide a clear, continuous and common picture of the battlefield. The Long-Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System (LRAS3) is a long-range multi-sensor system for the U.S. Army scout, providing the real-time ability to detect, recognize, identify and geo-locate distant targets. The LRAS3 is the premier ground combat reconnaissance

and surveillance system on the modern battlefield. The Improved Target Acquisition System (ITAS) with Far Target Location (FTL) is a combat proven system that provides long-range, lethal anti-armor and precision assault fires capability for the Squadron across the spectrum of contemporary operational environments. ITAS with the TOW missile provides the capability to defeat armored vehicles, bunkers, and buildings at extended ranges in all battlefield conditions. All of these systems will be integrated providing the Squadron a Common Operating Picture (COP) to better manage Command and Control. The integration of these systems will enable the Squadron to mass lethal fires utilizing mortars, artillery and TOWs on targets.

With everything on the Squadrons plate and the decrease in DOD funding the Squadron continues to excel in all metrics. The initiative, motivation, and professionalism of our Troopers continue to astound me. I am truly proud and honored to be the Commander of this great organization.

Saber Six Out.

LTC Jeffery K. Brownlee, SCO  
1-102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry  
50<sup>th</sup> IBCT NJARNG





**Command Sergeant Major's message** Family and friends of the 1-102d Cavalry "Show 'em The Way"; Your Soldiers continue to receive accolades from the leadership at the highest level within the State and the National Guard Bureau (NGB). The 50<sup>th</sup> IBCT Brigade Command Sergeant Major, CSM Alexander visited our soldier's last quarter and was thoroughly impressed by what he has witnessed.

Your Soldiers have impressed all with their professionalism and dedication to duty. As I visit our Soldiers across the State, I am not amazed, but increasingly confident that I have been blessed to lead the most competent and proficient soldiers ever. Their professionalism and work ethic is unsurpassed, and for that, I am thankful.

Since the beginning of FY-15 Forty-Four (44) of our soldiers have already attended and completed NCOES training, surpassing any unit in the 50<sup>th</sup> IBCT, "Show 'em the Way".

Dakota Troop recently completed their COMET Inspection with a passing score of 97%, this is another example of the professionals we have assigned to the 1-102<sup>nd</sup> CAV. Hatchet Troop is preparing for their COMET Inspection which is slated for March 2<sup>nd</sup> and no doubt is well prepared. Dakota Troopers have been tasked with providing a Maintenance element to augment the 3-1 CAV NTC Rotation; they will be "In the Box" as part of the BLUFOR element and will be evaluated by the 11<sup>th</sup> ACR, no doubt, they will impress!

In April, Geronimo Troop augmented with Comanche Troopers will be headed out to the National Training Center (NTC) in Ft. Irwin, CA to augment the 11<sup>th</sup> ACR as the OPFOR recon element. This will be a terrific opportunity for our scouts to get out there and hone their skills.

In July, Blackfoot Troop augmented with Comanche Troopers will also be headed out to NTC for a rotation as the OPFOR recon element. I am more than confident that this opportunity will invigorate our troopers and provide them with a different skill set that benefits the entire Squadron.

In these difficult economic times our soldiers are doing more with less, I expected nothing less from our soldiers, they continue to set the example and prove there are none better than the soldiers of the 1-102d Cavalry.

#### *Second Quarter 2015 1-102d Cav Promotions:*

PV1-PV2: Girard, Jesse Daniel; Powell, Khanai Homerado

PV2-PFC: Conklin, Kody Joseph; Bonilla, Andrew Jose; Yoshida, Fukuei; Morales, Justin; Almonte, Christian; Rodriguez, Miguel A; Valenciamoreno, Carlos Artur; Salerno, Elianny

PFC-SPC: Lloyd, David James; Reckhow, Michael James; Smith, Cagney Brendan; Perez, Kevin Tym; Gettel, Christopher John; Nowaldy, John James; Abreu, Juan Francisco; Garilao, Emir Santos Jr, Penetrante, John Paulo

SPC-SGT: Monroig, Marvin

SGT-SSG: Dort, Flobert

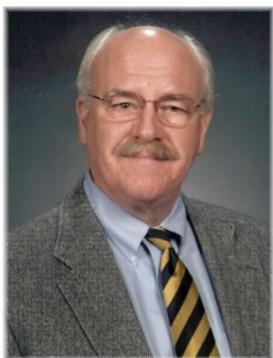
SSG-SFC: Cosel, John

Congratulations to all and best wishes, well deserved.

Scott E. Mechkowski  
Command Sergeant Major

*"Sabre Seven, Scouts Out!"*





**Editor's Message Phil Notestine** In this issue we resume *The Battle of Montrevel – Malafretaz* Germaine to this story is a book I have just finished entitled "*Ruckzug: The German Retreat from France, 1944*", by Joachim Ludewig, translated and edited by Major General David T. Zabecki, AUS Retired. This book was recommended and available through AUSA. *Ruckzug* details the retreat of German forces from France as the Allies overwhelmed them during the invasions Operations Overlord (Normandy) and Dragoon (southern France). A German reserve Army officer Joachim Ludewig who also works in the German Defense Ministry wrote the book in German. He uses both German and Allied sources. Revealed are the strengths and weaknesses of both sides. The Allies proved to be often hesitate, while the German forces were often exhausted and without adequate fighting vehicles, ammo and transportation. Allies dominated the skies. Nevertheless, the Germans were able to retreat into Germany, consolidate and continue fighting, prolonging what could have been an end and surrender several months before

May 1945.

Spring has just about sprung down here in beautiful Pinehurst, NC. Golfers are happy, birds are abundant and Spring peeper frog and chorusing aloud and a-plenty. Here in Pinewild, Army veterans and active soldiers are planning a big birthday party!

As you should know, our great United States Army was founded in July 14, 1775. (*The painting depicts General George Washington speaking for freedom, the Revolution and military service for the new nation*)

[http://www.history.army.mil/news/2013/130614a\\_armyBirth.html](http://www.history.army.mil/news/2013/130614a_armyBirth.html)

The event will be for only Pinewild residents. I was among the several recruited into the planning committee. We are identifying both active and veterans, and expect over 200 including wives. A similar event was held 5 years ago and was a great success.



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Combs.

Dennis presented Christine Bradley, Jenn Silva, and Anne Bergin with the *AUSA Patriotic Service Award*. Bill Morris presented them with the *Noble Patron Saint of Armor Awards* for their years of dedicated service.

Dennis discussed the *COL Harold J. Samsel Junior Officer of the Year Award* and presented it to 1LT Stephen Pruser. LTC Brownlee extolled his many virtues while CSM Mechkowski told his history with this fine officer. Dennis discussed the *Distinguished Member of the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment* and then awarded it to CPT Ryan Bailey.

Dennis introduced LTC Patrick du Tertre. He discussed how much the French love America and quoted a Pew Study that illustrated France's love for Americans. In 2003, in response to the feelings in America that the French had forgotten or were ungrateful, he co-founded the "*French Will Never Forget*", an organization that honors the fallen and remembers the sacrifices of America. He presented the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day film that sprung from this grassroots organization. A stirring DVD, the feelings of loyalty toward the French in return was felt throughout the room.

CPT Jim Giacchi, CO of A Troop presented his impressions and history of his trip to Montrevel. A wonderful telling of Giacchi and CPT Ryan Harty's experiences with the people of Montrevel and Dole as the French citizens celebrated the liberations of these cities from the Germans by the Americans and the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Recon Squadron (Mecz).

Dennis recognized Henry Bassman, from *American Legion* and *Bonds of Courage* and concluded the meeting. It was a good meeting, not a lot of interaction, because of the presentations—but fun. (Minutes provided by LTC Bill Morris)



## THE 11<sup>TH</sup> PANZER-DIVISION IN COMBAT

*The Battle of Montrevel/Malafretaz*

September 3, 1944 By: Frédéric Deprun

Translated from French by Mrs. Evelyn Freeman

(Continued from the Summer 2014 issue of THE SPUR)



**GERMAN COMBAT ENGINEERS PROGRESSION IN THE TWO VILLAGES.** The infantry mortars from each camp start a battery of gunfire with a lot of difficulty from one street to another because of lack of clearing in the narrow alleys of Montrevel. The Captain Piddington from the "117", prepares to react starting from the road to Etrez with the support of two M8 while supporting their gunfire on foot in an attempt to reach the main intersection. Facing the German advance protected behind their Marder and a Panzer III tanks, the 37mm fires consistently in order to immobilize the assault guns that end up being hit and losing its tank tracks. The first German attempt to capture the intersection has failed. The angle of the street is bombarded by shrapnel and direct hits coming from two camps, but a decision is not taken. The west side of Montrevel is completely under German control. Infiltrations by the combat engineers are supported by mortars in direction of the Town Hall Building.

The Unteroffizier (noncommissioned Officer), Thomas Mönner from the 10.(Pio).111<sup>th</sup> Panzergrenadier-Regiment gives this witnessing account of the preparation of the troops for the attack:

"These two automatic cannons which had been following us from Bourg have been parked behind the church of a small village south of the American positions. We had had the visit of a radio-truck and of the vehicle of the Colonel, assistant to the commander, who had gotten lost. Combat was raging especially around the edges of the intersection of Montrevel under attack by our tanks. We followed along the buildings bordering the main street defended by a Panzer with a captured Russian Cannon (Marder III, ndla.) that fired incessantly toward the intersection. When this one advanced some hundred meters, an American automatic submachine gun showered it with a series of shells which destroyed one of its tracks and killed one of the men. There was blood running from the sides. I stood about twenty meters behind it.

The Panzer tank backed up in the grass the best it could to unload the wounded. Two Panther tanks came to help us about an hour later so that we could capture this cursed intersection. The Americans defended the houses hand-to-hand before folding back farther with many losses. I had succeeded to capture the first floor of a house where we set up an MG42 machine gun on a heavy tripod. Our company henceforth held the road from where the Americans were coming."

Sergeant Ed Leonard from "Troop B", 3<sup>d</sup> Platoon, tells of gunfire exchanges with a Panzer III and a Marder III self-propelled gun:



"A few minutes later, I see from my outpost, a small German tank at roughly 800 meters on the road. The tank is heading straight for us! Schmetzer and Renzi in the M8 have spotted it also. The first shot fired by Renzi with the 37mm cannon somewhat shakes it some. The second shot stops it on the spot! Two shots right on target! What an aim! Following a short rest time, another vehicle can be heard coming from the corner of the intersection. When it appears, one can see an immense muzzle brake and cannon mounted on a tracked vehicle. Renzi opens fire. The shell hits the tank and blows off one of its tracks, which just hangs in front of the tank. The tank is immobilized and starts to back up. One knows that it can only back up the length of the broken track; thus, we know that it stuck just there! The tank is now out of sight and one can only see the two meters of track stretched out on the road."



Profile of an Opel Blitz 1,5 ton (Multi-purpose medium utility truck) captured in Italy by the men of the "117<sup>th</sup>" and reused as a workshop truck according to the witnessing account of Private Lee and the residents. In fact, one of them said: "An Opel covered truck with two large white stars had burned up on its front end; I found a piece of the camouflaged tarp that covered the back of the truck. I used it for a long time to store my potatoes, and now it has disappeared." One can imagine that this vehicle had been repainted but well identified with the numbers and letters from the unit during its debarkation in Provence. (Illustration Thierry Vallet.)

German attacks continue to strengthen at Malafretaz where the positions of "Troop F" at Granges des Prés et Moulin de Condamnas hold strong. Strong combat takes place between the village and the fields and small alleys downwards by lots of mortar gunfire and unsuccessful advances from both camps in the fields. A German noncommissioned officer, a combat engineer, has been hit. A resident saw a puddle of blood on the side of the road and the next day, he picked up the pistol belt and pistol and took both items to the Police Station. But the situation deteriorates hour by hour, and the troopers, in spite of their efforts to rejoin the center of Montrevel, are isolated in two farms and the Germans, in much larger numbers and better armed, henceforth control all movements in a distance.



Panther MK V tank from the 15<sup>th</sup> Panzer-Regiment in combat in August 1944, after the losses of Meximieux, the tanks will hesitate before attacking Montrevel from the front preferring to support the Infantry progression. (Coll. F. Deprun.)

The Unteroffizier (Noncommissioned Officer), Thomas Mönner, 10. (Pio)./111<sup>th</sup> Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment photographed at Belfort a few days following the attack on Montrevel at the time of awarding decorations. (Coll. F. Deprun.)



Photographic reproduction illustrating the Marder Assault Gun from the 2/Panzerjager Abteilung 61 (Anti-tank Battalion) before this one would lose its tracks following gunfire from a 37mm from an M8 on the road to Bourg. (Montage F. Lebrun.)

**ARMORED ATTACKS** It was about 11:00 when the German-armored attack started. A Panzer III and a Panther MK V advance in direction of the Montrevel intersection, but the Meximieux dramatic episode somewhat attenuated the intensity of the 15<sup>th</sup> Panzer-Regiment advance in the center of town. The progression is slow and careful and the Panther and the section of Panther (tanks) arriving progressively from Bourg will not be able to maneuver in the narrow alleys of Montrevel. Still protected by the main intersection and most important strategic point, one of the two M8 led by Captain Piddington is destroyed by one Panther gunfire around 1130. In addition, combat is engaged henceforth to the north of the Town Hall in the gardens and orchards where the German infantry inexorably pushes the troopers in the last quadrilateral side of the Town Hall. From the line of German artillery installed on the ridge toward Malafretaz, the Panzergrenadiers attempt to start an automatic cannon of 2cm Flak to support an advance toward the Town Hall which would prohibit any movement that would venture outside the Town Square. Captain Wood radios out for immediate emergency artillery reinforcement to fulfill the mission. In spite of the emergency of the situation and following many endless attempts, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bat., 179<sup>th</sup> IR, "Troop C" and a few tanks from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division are sent toward Montrevel but arrive too late, toward 16 h. on the outskirts east of Etrez.

The vise tightens quickly around the road to Etrez and the Town Hall Square, the Panzergrenadiers infiltrate themselves from house to house and courtyard to courtyard and right into American lines. The heroic action of LT Daniel W. Lee of "Troop A", HQ Platoon, 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron only delays surrender as the Germans soon surround the "117<sup>th</sup>". During mid-morning, the situation is so serious that Captain Wood announces to the "117<sup>th</sup>" Commander that it is going to be necessary to move back if reinforcement does not arrive quickly.

At 1430, the Americans are completely surrounded. After several hours of raging combat, LT Lee organizes an attack to go dislodge the German artillery, which incessantly harasses the Squadron lines. His small group arrives from the top of the ridge where they chase out some German snipers. From the top of this ridge that dominates Malafretaz equally, Lee spots below a Sd. Kfz. 251 half-track from the 111<sup>th</sup> Panzergrenadier-Regiment and seven Germans around two Mortars in battery motion. Armed with just a rifle and several grenades, leaving his men behind, he crawls in direction of the Germans' positions. When he gets about thirty meters behind the two mortars, the Germans spot him and open fire. Lee is wounded on his thigh. He is suffering and loses a lot of blood but refuses to back down and continues to drag himself toward the Germans. He first takes down five Panzergrenadiers while the others flee the scene. A captured M8 appears and opens fire on him. Lee takes cover behind an abandoned half-tank where he finds a Panzerfaust (a light disposable infantry anti-tank weapon). In spite of his wounds, he advances in the direction of the M8 under a shower of gunfire. He fires his rocket on the vehicle constrained to move back because it is probably damaged. Lee has succeeded all alone to chase away the Germans from the perimeter. He has lost a lot of blood and he collapses as he rejoins his men.



**Sergeant Ed Leonard of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, "Troop B" gives the account of how the combat unfolds:** "The German tanks begin to aim at our supply vehicles located at the entrance of the town. The shells begin to rain on our left flank just above us! Precise gunfire, horizontal trajectories, they never miss their target! Our ammunition supplies and fuel vehicles are pulverized one after the other. Our emergency exit, which is the road to Etrez, is now blocked by burning vehicles! Sometime later, a light tank appears at the intersection in front of us! A dozen of our men open fire on this perfect target at the same time. The tank backs up and seeks shelter. We later learned that the Germans had been impressed by our gunfire power and had estimated its power to an entire battalion!"

"After this first enemy tentative breakthrough, our vehicles are put under cover on the city square near the Town Hall. An M8 commanded by Sergeant Schmetzer with T/5 Leopold J. Renzi at the command of the 37mm cannon stations itself at the entrance of town. I proceed to deploy about six of my men to cover the flanks and behind the tank. It is somewhat calm now, but at the same time, an occasional gunfire may be heard at a distance. Mitchell is on our right flank with his people from the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon and the Lieutenant Padraig O'Dea and Lt. Lee all defending our left flank. Then suddenly, one realizes that we, a small troop of reconnaissance cavalry soldiers (150 men) find ourselves face to face with the vanguard of the 11<sup>th</sup> Panzer-Division! Then we learn that one of our tanks waiting at the north exit of town has been destroyed by a German tank! We no longer can move forward or backward!"

**AN INEVITABLE INCIRCLEMENT** In the beginning of the afternoon, the two surviving M5 Stuarts from "Troop F" arrive from Etrez in support of Montrevel from the north. The Pioniere (engineers) have laid mines at the north and northeast exits of the village. Some Schü-Minen 42 are interspersed with some Teller mines and buried lightly in the gardens and orchards. The tanks are immediately engaged by the Germans and the 11<sup>th</sup> Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung (reconnaissance battalion). They respond with machine guns and 37mm cannon, but one of the Stuarts is destroyed by a mine on the edge of the main highway while the other explodes on a mine laid by the Pioniere (engineers). The exit north of the village is blocked by the ErsatzKompanie from the 111<sup>th</sup> Panzer-Division-Regiment. Lieutenant Cronin from the First Platoon "Troop A" tries in vain with M8 to find an exit door from this trap of Montrevel, but he encounters impassable routes held by the Germans. In addition, snipers stationed in trees track their movements in the alleys. At 1530, the situation in the center of town in Montrevel is desperate. There is no more ammunition and too many wounded in City Hall. Captain Wood calls the Squadron Command Post of the "117<sup>th</sup>" to announce that it is henceforth impossible for him to withdraw his vehicles and surviving men. It was the last radio message received at the CP coming from Montrevel.

Captains Piddington and Wood attempt a tentative disengagement of their troopers from the center of town but see a Panther tank turning from Etrez road to a narrow street some ten meters from the Town Hall Square to take cover and take position to fire. The Germans secure the road to Etrez before the final assault on the Town Hall Square, which is slightly higher. A jeep is destroyed at a distance by an explosive fired by a Panther tank, which must fire a second time to reach its target, the first shell piercing a large hole in a house nearby. Then, with his carbine from a distance of some 100 meters, Captain Wood succeeds in taking down the tank chief who was attempting to come out of his turret after taking the Homont alley to the right. The young tank chief, Karl Lohn of the 4./Panzer-Regiment 15 died on the spot.

Photograph showing the Chief of the 5.Kompanie of the Pz-Aufkl.Abt.11 (Reconnaissance Battalion): L'Oberfeldwebel (Sergeant First Class) Lorenz Harthan and his men at the time he is awarded the "Combat Medal in gold" (Nahkampfspange in gold), June 12, 1944 from the hand of Commander von Wietersheim. Harthan will be put on reserve but it is his Aufklärer (scouts) who will capture the north of Montrevel along with the 5<sup>th</sup> "Harthan Kompanie". (Illustrierter Beobachter, September 28, 1944.)





The end of two M5 Stuart tanks destroyed near the church square is not clear. The tanks from Troop "F" which supposed to have been located between Malafretaz and the road to Etrez had attempted to find an exit toward the north beginning at the center of Montrevel for the total of forces from the "117<sup>th</sup>." It is noted that this tank had rolled upon a mine planted by the Pioniere (mine engineers) from the 11<sup>th</sup> Panzer-Division on the axis and exits of the village. (Ass. Mémoire de l'Ain.)



Lieutenant Daniel W. Lee, Troop "A", HQ Platoon, 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, participated in the battle of Montrevel/Malafretaz. He survived his wounds and returned to the "117<sup>th</sup>" in January 16, 1945 in the heart of Troop "C". He is promoted to the grade of 1LT March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945 and President Truman will award him the "Medal of Honor" on January 1946 for his actions and bravery in Montrevel. During the Korean War, Captain Lee is recalled but did not deploy. He died at the age of 65 and is buried in his birth city of Alma, Georgia. (Ass. Mémoire de l'Ain.)

Platoon Sergeant, Ed Leonard, Troop "B", 3<sup>d</sup> Platoon, 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron died in 2014 at 95. Until that time, he was the only surviving soldier having participated in the combat of Montrevel/Malafretaz. Decades later, he received the French Legion of Honor (Ass. Mémoire de l'Ain.)



**THE ATTACK AND THE SURRENDER** The reinforcement news circulated among the many wounded of the "117<sup>th</sup>" piled up on the first floor of the Town Hall, but upon receiving the attack cancellation message, each finds himself henceforth fending for himself. Pushed back toward the school and Town Hall buildings, the last defenders practically have no more ammunition for their guns and machine guns while the Panther tanks and half-tanks surround the Town Square in front of the building. The Panzergrenadiers now invade en masse the alleys amongst the last scattered gunfire while one of the Panther tanks fires point-blank into the edifice adding one more dead to the American ranks; the piercing shell of 7.5 cm. comes through the main hall wounding two amongst the GI's. The Troopers and Germans exchange gunfire through the floors and confront each other from one house to the other. They run, go up and down the floor stairs in residences, and fire at each other point blank. The gallant last stand of the two captains will be to empty the last twenty-five cartridges from a window on the aiming slot of the Panther tank before surrendering. Negotiations are rapid; the some forty survivors surrender with their sixty wounded comrades.

The Oberst Wilde, Commander of the 111<sup>th</sup> Panzer-Regiment and Major Karl Bode, Commander of the 11<sup>th</sup> Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung (reconnaissance battalion) arrive on the Town Hall Square under security to discuss with the two Captains of the "117<sup>th</sup>". Wilde explains that the unit they confronted was the 11<sup>th</sup> Panzer-Division seasoned by the three years of combat on the Eastern Front and manifests his admiration for the manner in which the combat had been led and assures that the 117<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Cavalry Squadron has been the strongest resistance force that he had had to confront. The 80 German prisoners taken that morning in the theater building were now free. They stayed all day under the surveillance of the two FFI in the projection room before the French flee the scene just before surrender.

At Malafretaz, in the surrounding farms where "Troop F" held out, the GI's must surrender their weapons because the German armored vehicles and the Panther tanks erupted all around and exit toward Etrez was henceforth no longer possible. The Troop "F" loses all its vehicles and 40 prisoners from the "117<sup>th</sup>" are seen in the afternoon by the residents escorted by armed German soldiers, one every two meters, going up toward the village. A detail indicates that the Germans still feared the captives since all the soldiers are seen without shoe laces and each GI walks in short-sleeved shirt. Locked up in the Malafretaz school, the Germans will load up the prisoners on trucks with side rails in the beginning of the evening to take them toward Belfort and Germany. After the combat, the residents divide the contents left in vehicles and pick-up here and there the equipment scattered on the ground everywhere.

While a farm in Malafretaz had been burned down, Montrevel also received some destruction even though the artillery had not been used by either of the two adversaries. Most houses on the Etrez road and those surrounding the Town Hall Square show some impacts of shell holes and fire residue still visible today. Many demolished vehicles litter the streets, which would be the object of curiosity for the residents of the region the following day, each searching for a souvenir amongst the abandoned equipment. To be continued....



**Membership Update – SMG (Ret) Ken Mahan** Trooper! Look at your address label! If the date is not September 2015 or later, you are behind in your dues. Your Subscription to THE SPUR is going to run out, due to non-payment of dues. A sample of label:

**SEPT 15**

**KENNETH L. MAHAN  
12 W. WALNUT ST.  
METUCHEN NJ 08840-2616**

**To Members behind in their dues, you will have date circled in RED!** This is the only notice you will receive. Send information and/or dues to me at the Metuchen address shown above. **Annual regular dues of \$20.00, Associate dues \$15.00 and enlisted E5-E1 \$10.00 are due in September.** Make checks Payable to **117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry**

**Association. Pay Pal** can be used as well – link is on our web site [www.117th-cav.org](http://www.117th-cav.org) **Boosters** help pay for SPUR mailings to WWII veterans and their widows, not for your dues! We cannot continue to mail The SPUR to lapsed members. Stick with us, we want you as a member, but you must pay your own “freight”. **Email:** Please send your email address to me at [Kennethmahan05@gmail.com](mailto:Kennethmahan05@gmail.com) We are compiling an email list of members and we want to include you.

**Association web site:** [www.117th-cav.org/](http://www.117th-cav.org/) Read past issues of The SPUR, look up the WWII histories of the 38<sup>th</sup>, 102<sup>nd</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons (Mecz). All WWII Veterans will no longer pay dues, you will see WWII over your name. **New Members** SSG Mitchell Corrado. **OLD Members Dropped** due to lack of dues payment - LTC Timothy Coakley, Elisha McKinley and Hector Fernandez.

### **TAPS**

**James Hanna Rankin**, 93, of Chatham, died on Thursday, January 8, 2015 at CareOne, Morristown. He was born on June 8, 1921 in Glen Ridge, NJ and graduated from East Orange High School in 1939. He attended Rutgers University before entering the Army National Guard in the 102d Cavalry Regiment "Essex Troop". The regiment, consisting of two squadrons, was sent to England in 1943. Jim was in Troop C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, which was sent to North Africa and later reflagged as the separate 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz). He served five years in England, North Africa, Italy and was in the invasion of southern France, Operation DRAGOON. The 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry was among the first troops to enter Germany. He received a Purple Heart and the Bronze Star for Valor. In 1949, he married Elinor Dickie Rankin whom he had known since childhood.

They moved to Chatham in 1959 where they raised their three children. His wife died in 2010. He was an officer of Fidelity Union Trust for many years, retiring in 1983. Mr. Rankin was active in the Madison Area YMCA and the Chatham Fish & Game Protective Association where he served on the board. He was an avid gardener and loved traveling. He was especially proud of his Scottish heritage and traveled to Scotland numerous times.

He is survived by his son Paul of New York City and his daughters Constance LaBounty of Davis, CA, Janet Weglarz of Somerville, NJ as well as four grandsons. Donations in his honor may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, Greater New Jersey Chapter, 400 Morris Avenue, Suite 251, Denville, NJ 07834. Services will be private.





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Shown at the left of each name is the last issue and year in which your entry will be published.

SP = Spring, SU = Summer, FA = Fall, WI = Winter

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WI-15 HEIDI AHLBORN daughter of 2LT HAROLD "SMOKIE"  
OWEN *Class of '41* 102<sup>nd</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> CAV WWII Troops B & C  
SP-15 EMIL & MARGARET ALLGEIER  
WI-26 CHARLES ANGELLO  
SU-15 NANCY ASHFORD & JEANNIE BROWN (sisters)  
(mem. father) SSG WM. T. TITTER  
WWII B TROOP 117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
SP-26 BOB & LORRAINE APGAR  
SU-32 ED BARRY (mem. of) BILL BARRY TROOP D (AIR)  
5-117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
SP-17 BILL BENNETT  
FA-21 RALPH BOCKINO (mem. of) by wife CATHERINE  
SP-17 MSG TOM BULLOCK TROOP A 5-117<sup>th</sup> CAVALRY  
FA-15 SGM (Ret) RICHARD T. BURKE  
FA- 24 JUDGE SANTI CARNEVALI, WWII 102<sup>nd</sup> & 117<sup>th</sup> CAVALRY  
FA-15 DON CARSON (mem. of) MSG GARY G. HADDICAN  
SP-15 LTC (Ret) CLAUDE and HELEN COOK  
SU-15 LTC (Ret) PETER D'ELIA  
FA-16 ROBERT A. DENNIN JR. - A FRIEND  
FA-15 SGM (Ret) JIM DOOLEY  
WI-18 1SG (Ret) PHILIP DUNN, A Troop mem. wife BETTY  
SP-16 ROGER ELLERT  
WI-17 MANUEL G. FERRI  
WI-15 LTC (Ret) ALAN R. FISHER  
WI-22 MIRIAM FISHER (mem. of) WILLIAM E. FISHER  
WI-17 HENRY & MARION FORSTENHAUSLER  
WI- 52 JOHN FRANTZ, LT A Troop 5-117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
SU-16 BILL GRUSS & LINDA  
FA-20 BARBARA HANSEN wife of TOM HANSEN  
SP-18 LAURANCE HASKETT, WWII - 117<sup>th</sup> CAVALRY SGT Troop C  
SP-15 HERB HUBER, WWII 117<sup>th</sup> CAVALRY T5 Troop E  
(Assault Guns)  
WI-18 LTC (Ret) JOHN S. HUFF (mem. of) C Troop, 117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
'43-'44 mem. HANK EGBERT & BILL CRONE bros.-in-arms  
WI-18 BILL HYNDMAN (mem. of) CPT PAUL SEIDEL, F CO.  
WWII 117<sup>th</sup> CAV. *Silver Star, Fr. Croix de Guerre*  
WI-19 ANNE MARIE & GERALD "JERRY" INFANTINO  
FA-15 CHARLES JOHNSON WWII 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Recon  
WI -24 ESTELLE, ANDREW & JAY LASNER in mem. Arnold  
Lasner - husband, father - proud veteran Troop B 117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
SP-15 ROCHUS E. & CELESTE LAWRENCE  
WI-16 Dr. DANIEL W. "TREY" LEE III, (mem. of) CPT DANIEL W.  
LEE, **CMH**, WWII Troop A, 117<sup>th</sup> CAVALRY RECON SQ.  
SU-19 1LT (Ret) EDWARD J. LEONARD, *Class of '41*, PSG B Troop  
117<sup>th</sup> CAV, Montrevel POW French *Legion of Honor*  
WI-16 SSG (Ret) THOMAS J. LINDSEY & MARY  
WI-18 C. J. MacNICHOLS  
SU-16 JEAN & SGM (Ret.) KEN MAHAN  
SP-16 CSM (Ret) A. A. MAGGS  
SP-16 BRIAN & BRUCE MALONEY (mem.) 1SG WM. B. MALONEY  
WI-20 KEVIN MALONEY (mem.) 1SG BILL MALONEY SR. and  
My brother TIM MALONEY  
WI-33 PETE & EDITH MARTINEZ  
SU-16 PEDRO MARTINEZ  
SU-16 ED & BETH MATTHEWS (mem. of Ed's father)  
T4 ED MATTHEWS B TROOP 102<sup>nd</sup> CAV WWII  
FA-16 WAYNE McCANN  
SP-29 CSM SCOTT MECHANOWSKI 1-102<sup>nd</sup> CAVALRY  
SP-23 CW4 (Ret) BILL MERRING & CHARLOTTE

WI-16 ROMAN MILANOWICZ and BEVERLY  
SU-15 JUANITA MITCHELL (mem. of) FRANK,  
*Class of '41*, PSG B Troop 117<sup>th</sup> CAV, Montrevel POW  
WI-15 CW5 (Ret) FRANK MNICH & JANET  
SP-17 DENNIS & GARY MONAHAN (mem. father) PVT MILLARD D.  
MONAHAN TRP B 117<sup>th</sup> CAV - POW MONTREVEL  
WI-16 1SG (Ret) Troop D (AIR) RONNIE & CONNIE NIER in mem.  
MSG ROCCO SPANO HHT 5/117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
SP-17 PHILIP NOTESTINE (mem. of) MAJ JOHN B. COULSTON  
Troops C & E, *Class of '41*; 602<sup>nd</sup> Tank Destroyer BN '43-'45  
FA-27 JOYCE OWEN wife of 2LT HAROLD "SMOKIE" OWEN,  
*Class of '41*, 102<sup>nd</sup> & 117<sup>th</sup> CAV - B & C Troops WWII  
SP-16 DR. FOTINOS PANAGAKOS & JUDITH  
WI-16 FRANK PATRICK  
SP-16 TOM PETTY  
WI-15 CSM (Ret) AL PHELAN mem. COL KEN KLEIN  
WI-16 (mem. of) COL (Ret.) TOM PIDDINGTON, *Class of '41*  
FA-15 SALLIE LEE PIERCE (Widow of) DANIEL LEE, **CMH**  
SU-19 ANTON and MARILYN PLONNER  
SU-15 LTC (Ret) KEN QUAAS (mem) DOROTHEA  
SP-16 ART REINBOLD  
FA-15 ROBERT RICHARDSON  
WI-92 MRS. ROBERT D. ROBBINS, (mem. of) ROBBIE  
WI-38 FRED RODMAN, (mem. of) brother) WALTER RODMAN  
F Company (tanks) 102<sup>nd</sup> CAV WWII  
SU-15 DONALD SAMSEL (mem. of) Father) COL (Ret.) HAROLD  
SAMSEL, *Class of '41*, 117<sup>th</sup> CAV WWII FR. *Legion of Honor*  
WI-15 LTC (Ret) CHRIS SANDS  
SP-15 SALCIDO FAMILY (in mem. of) 1LT MANUEL SALCIDO  
(Ft Jackson '42) 117<sup>th</sup> CAV. F CO. KIA Italy June 1944  
SP-18 ROBERT SALCIDO (mem of) brother) 1LT MANUEL SALCIDO  
SP-17 JAMES SCANLON  
SP-16 EILEEN SCHNARR (mem. husband) WILLIE  
SP-18 BILL SEDLAK  
SP-15 LTC (Ret) ALFRED H. M. SHEHAB, WWII 38<sup>th</sup> CAV  
*Fr. Legion of Honor*  
WI-15 ROBERT SMITH  
SU-15 CPT VINCENT SOLOMENO (mem.) LTC (Ret) JAMES A.  
BRODERICK & COL RUDY SAULTER  
FA-17 JOHN & MARGARET SUITER  
WI-15 1SG GEORGE THOMAS  
SP-19 JOE & SABRINA TOOMEY (mem. of) BROTHER  
SGM ANTHONY FREDA JR.  
WI-17 CW4 (Ret.) DON TRACY & CHICKIE  
FA-16 CHARLES A VIVIANO - 50<sup>th</sup> CAV RCN SQDN  
WI-15 JOHN WILSON  
WI-18 LTC (Ret.) FRANK WISWALL, USAF *Class of '41*  
B Troop, 102<sup>nd</sup> CAV '41- '42 Fr. *Legion of Honor*  
WI-27 FRANK A. WOODS, PSG - A Troop, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon  
117<sup>th</sup> CAV WWII  
SP-18 MARTHA ZOLLER, FRANK MITCHELL JR. & PAM GUNTER  
(mem. of) FRANK & JUANITA MITCHELL  
SU- 3013 FRG HHT 1-102<sup>nd</sup> CAVALRY

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To become a Booster of *The Spur*, please send \$10.00 for a year of inclusion as a Booster in four issues of *The Spur*. Make check payable to the **117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association** - \$10.00 for each year of support. Mail to **Bill Gruss, Treasurer, 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association, 21 Blake Drive, Clark NJ 07066-1645**. Indicate how you wish to be listed:

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*Troop C, 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Recon Squadron (Mecz) leads the way into Germany. Now for just a bit of rest...*

*Pictures are from 2LT Al Robbins collection. Robbins led 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Troop C. He had been a 102d Cavalry horse trooper in the late 1930's. Robbins was a fine cavalry leader, courageous and resourceful.*



*Cavalry tankers trained in the M3 "Stuart", and fought her in North Africa. The M5A1 Stuart shown above replaced the M3. Roomier and powered by twin Cadillac engines, it was still obsolete and under gunned, using a 37 MM canon. F Company tankers of the 117<sup>th</sup> CRS and 102d Cavalry Group made the best of it...developing outstanding accuracy, placing good shots in vital places. In February and March 1945, all M5s were replaced by the new M24 "Chaffee" light tank. Powered by twin Cadillacs, she had torsion bar suspension and a new 75 MM cannon. Better mobility, much better main gun effectiveness, but still inferior to German Panzer IV, Panthers and Tigers. Nevertheless, the seasoned tankers LOVED her! She was sure pretty!*



An M24 of the 117th Cavalry Recon Squadron test fires its gun in the St. Jean Saverne area of France, March 1945. The circled turret star is rare for an ETO vehicle. (US Army)

*The SPUR*  
c/o SGM (Ret) Ken Mahan  
12 W. Walnut St.  
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DUES DUE ↓

*1<sup>ST</sup> New Jersey Cavalry*



**MISSION STATEMENT:** It is the continuing objective of *The SPUR* to foster and preserve the Spirit of the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association, and to promote and enhance the friendships and camaraderie of our members, who are mutually bound by service and devotion to our country. **NEXT ASSOCIATION MEETINGS - Fridays 1930 hours:** April 10, 2015; June 12, 2015; September 11, 2015; November 13, 2015.